Gap in access to education

2687. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that there is a huge gap in access to primary and higher education in various regions of the country;

(b) whether Government is also aware that this gap is also in terms of quality education available to children in various parts of the country;

(c) how Government proposes to bridge this gap;

(d) whether Government's vision to provide education to all would cover quality education as well; and

(e) if so, whether Government proposes to involve private sector also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) Access measured in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio for Primary and Higher Education varies across States. There are several reasons for differences in the standard of education in the country *viz.* the availability of good infrastructure for educational institutions, faculty, access etc., The country being vast and education being in the Concurrent list of the Constitution where States are responsible for the educational institutions within their jurisdiction, differences in standard do occur due to various factors. The standard of education is perceived by competence of the individuals that the system turns out. It varies from institution to institution in both Government and Private Sectors.

The Government of India has also set up authorities like Universities Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education for coordination and development of higher education in the country. These regulatory bodies have framed, within their powers, the required rules and regulations for bringing about uniformity and a certain standard of education in the country. These regulatory bodies also give grants to the various universities and educational institutions in the country for improving the quality of education. As part of the Central Government's commitment to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young persons a centrally sponsored scheme to universalize access to improve quality of education at secondary stage, called Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has been launched in March, 2009. The scheme seeks to universalize access to secondary education, while improving quality and ensuring quality.

(e) Governments strategy is for expansion and quality improvement in the country's education sector. Government favours active support and involvement of private participation for funding and management of educational institutions subject to reasonable surplus earned and the same being ploughed back for development of institutions. The Eleventh Plan document as approved by the National Development Council, also mentions the need to explore private sector initiatives and various forms of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the education sector.

Government has already decided to set up 2500 Model Schools and 300 Polytechnics under Public Private Partnership mode during 11th Plan period. A proposal for setting up of 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology in various parts of the country under PPP mode is also under consideration.

Interest among children towards schools

*2688. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the incidents of punishing and torturing of young children by teachers have been increasing continuously;

(b) if so, the measures taken by Government so far to prevent such incidents and by when the outcome of the same is likely to be achieved; and

(c) whether Government would take steps to maintain interest towards school among the young children and to shorten the distance between their school and homes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) No, Sir. However, there have been reports about sporadic incidents of teachers punishing children.

(b) This Ministry has issued advisories to the State/UT Governments, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Council for Indian School Certificate Examination, etc. to prohibit corporal punishment and cruelty to students and to create an atmosphere free from fear. Corporal punishment has been strictly prohibited in schools run by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and also by schools affiliated to CBSE.

(c) Such steps include facilitating joyful and stress free learning, enabling holistic learning, life skill programs, health and wellness programs, physical education programs, alternative to home work, no school bag for classes 1 and 2, etc.

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, efforts have been made to provide access to a primary school within 1 km of most of the habitations.

Reservation of native students in Central Universities

2689. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has examined the suggestions coming from the public that unless Central Universities reserve a certain percentage of seats to the people of the State where such universities are established, the main purpose of giving benefit to the people of the State cannot be realized; and

(b) if so, the details of steps Government proposes to take in this regard?

*Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.